Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Please amend the claims as shown.

1. (Currently Amended) Process for producing anhydrous alkali sulfide, comprising spray drying a ~~composition~~ liquid substance preparation selected from the group consisting of an alkali sulfide solution, alkali sulfide suspension, alkali sulfide dispersion and alkali sulfide water of crystallisation melt, ~~with~~ into a chamber and atomizing said liquid substance preparation in contact with a hot gas stream consisting of inert drying gas loaded with water vapour to dry said composition and thereby produce anhydrous alkali sulfide.

2. (Currently Amended) Process for producing anhydrous alkali sulfide according to claim 1, ~~further comprising~~ wherein the drying is performed under normal pressure or a slight overpressure of $\Delta p=0$ to 200 mbar above ambient pressure.

3. (Currently Amended) Process for producing anhydrous alkali sulfide according to claim 1, ~~wherein inert gas in stationary operation is avoided.~~ further comprising recycling exhaust gas without introduction of additional inert gas and drying in pure superheated water vapour.

4. (Currently Amended) Process for producing anhydrous alkali sulfide according to claim 1, further comprising recycling the drying gas, ~~the use of~~ without adding additional inert gas in stationary operation ~~is avoided~~ and excess water vapour is removed by condensation so that it is free from exhaust gases.

5. (Currently Amended) Process for producing anhydrous alkali sulfide, comprising spray drying a ~~composition~~ liquid substance preparation selected from the group consisting of an alkali sulfide solution, alkali sulfide suspension, alkali sulfide dispersion and alkali sulfide water of crystallization melt, ~~with~~ into a chamber and atomizing said liquid substance preparation in contact with a hot gas stream consisting of inert drying gas loaded with water vapour wherein the inert gas is a member selected from the group consisting of nitrogen, helium, argon and mixtures thereof, and wherein the water ~~vapor~~ vapour load is greater than 1 g/kg at a dew point of -15°C.

6. (Original) Process for producing anhydrous alkali sulfide according to claim 5, wherein that drying is performed under normal pressure or a slight overpressure of $\Delta p=0$ to 200 mbar above ambient pressure.

7. (Original) Process for producing anhydrous alkali sulfide according to claim 5, wherein a solution of $Na_2S * xH_2O$ ($3 \leq x \leq 9$) is spray dried.

8. (Original) Process for producing anhydrous alkali sulfide according to claim 5, wherein said composition is atomized and brought into contact with a hot gas stream of the inert drying gas.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (New) Process for producing anhydrous alkali sulfide, consisting essentially of spray drying a liquid substance preparation selected from the group consisting of an alkali sulfide solution, alkali sulfide suspension, alkali sulfide dispersion and alkali sulfide water of crystallisation melt, into a chamber and atomizing said liquid substance preparation in contact with a hot gas stream consisting of inert drying gas loaded with water vapour to dry said composition and thereby produce anhydrous alkali sulfide.

11. (New) Process according to claim 1, wherein nitrogen and water vapour are used as the hot gas stream.